

STARBLAZER

A vibrant, stylized illustration of a character with a large, ornate, golden and blue mask. The character has a long, flowing black beard and is wearing a red garment. The background is a colorful, abstract landscape with green foliage, red flowers, and a large, bright yellow sun or moon in the upper right corner. The overall style is reminiscent of mid-20th-century pulp magazine art.

SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 52

14p

THE MASK OF FEAR

STARBLAZER

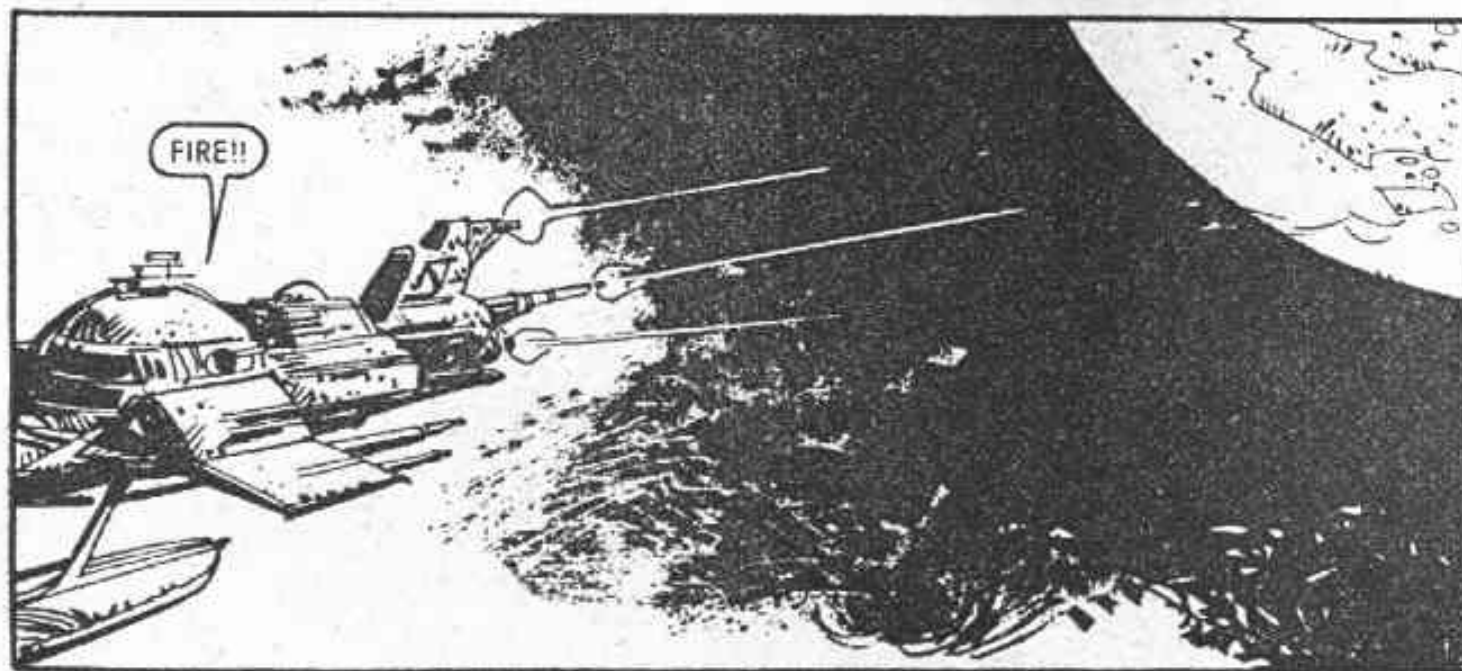


BY 3000 A.D. MAN HAD SPREAD OUT AND
COLONISED WORLDS AMONG THE STARS
WITH MEN, WENT CRIME. WEALTH AND
POSITION WERE HIGHLY PRIZED, AND LIFE
WAS CHEAP. DESPERATE MEN WOULD
DO DESPERATE THINGS TO ACHIEVE WEALTH
AND POSITION—EVEN DESTROY ENTIRE
WORLDS.

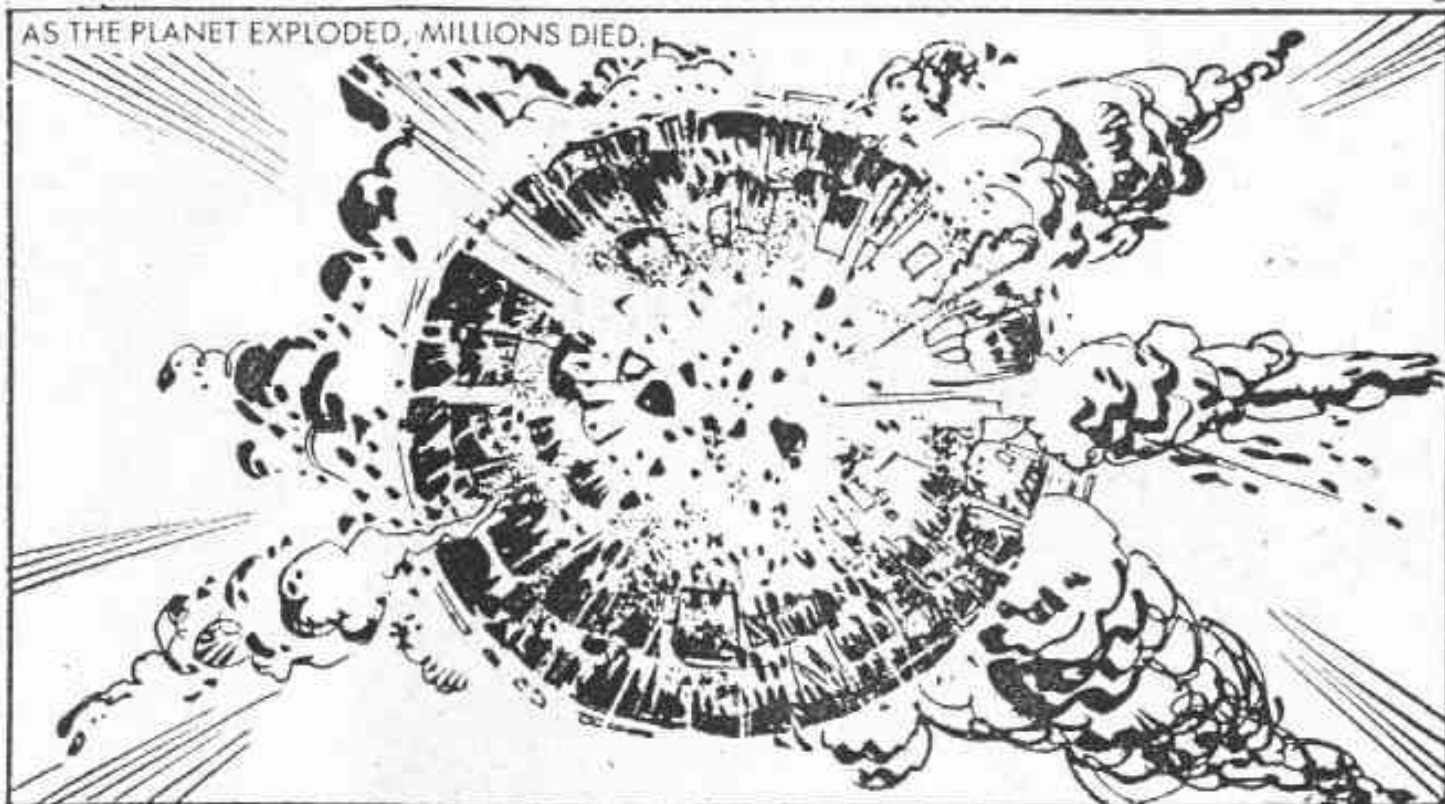
The MASK OF FEAR



A SLEEK PRIVATE GUNSHIP APPROACHED THE
PLANET DELTAN IN THE ORIONUS OMEGA NEBULA.

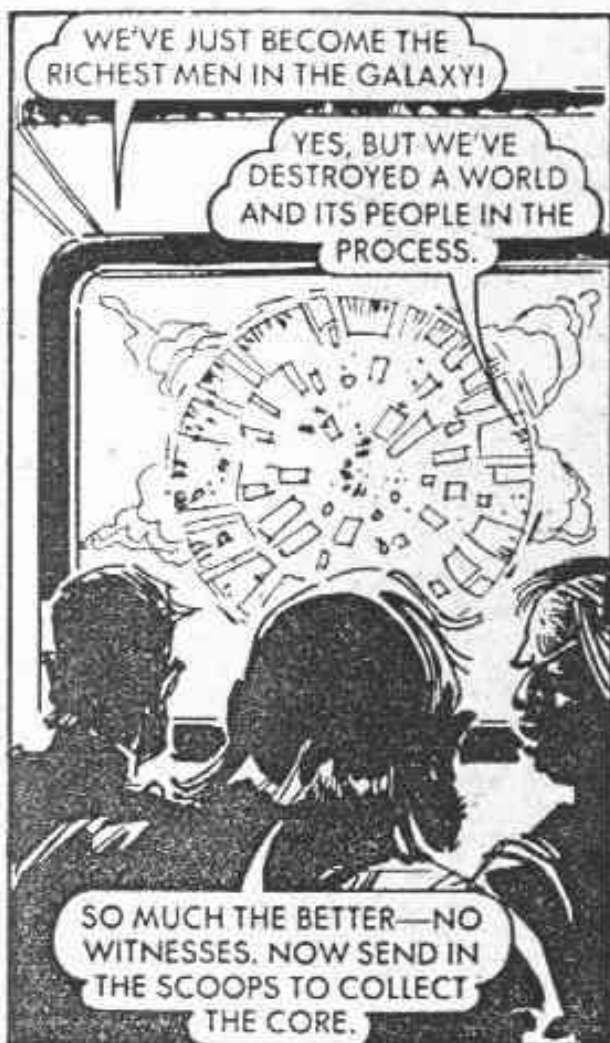


AS THE PLANET EXPLODED, MILLIONS DIED.



WE'VE JUST BECOME THE RICHEST MEN IN THE GALAXY!

YES, BUT WE'VE DESTROYED A WORLD AND ITS PEOPLE IN THE PROCESS.



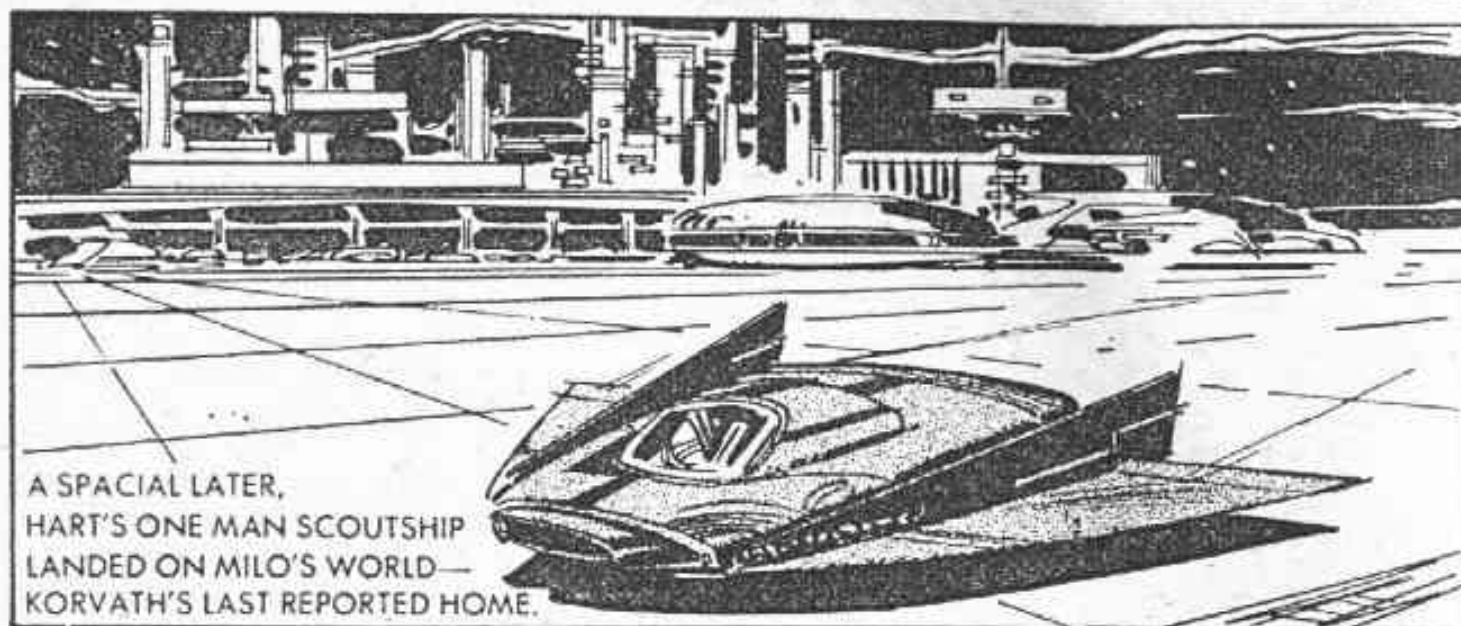
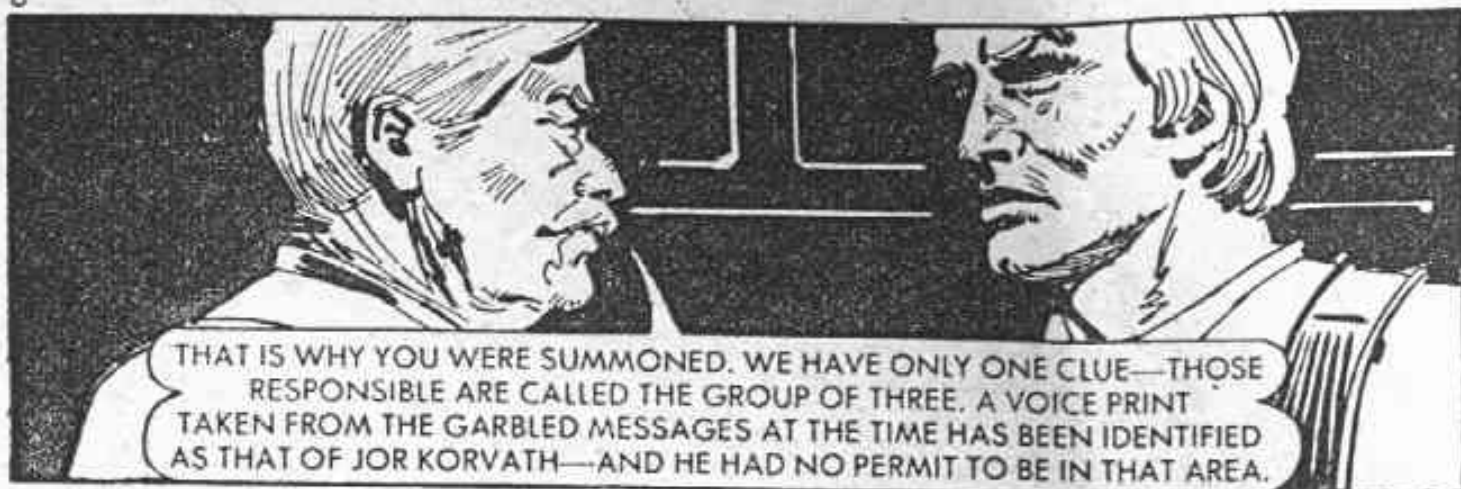
SO MUCH THE BETTER—NO WITNESSES. NOW SEND IN THE SCOOPS TO COLLECT THE CORE.

THE NEWS OF THE DELTAN DISASTER REACHED THE EARTH HQ OF THE GALACTIC SECURITY SERVICE.

HART TALLIS—I'M SORRY I HAD TO BE THE ONE TO TELL YOU ABOUT DELTAN. I KNOW ALL YOUR FAMILY WERE THERE.

LET ME TRACK DOWN THE CRIMINALS.







I DO NOT WISH TO
BE SILENCED.

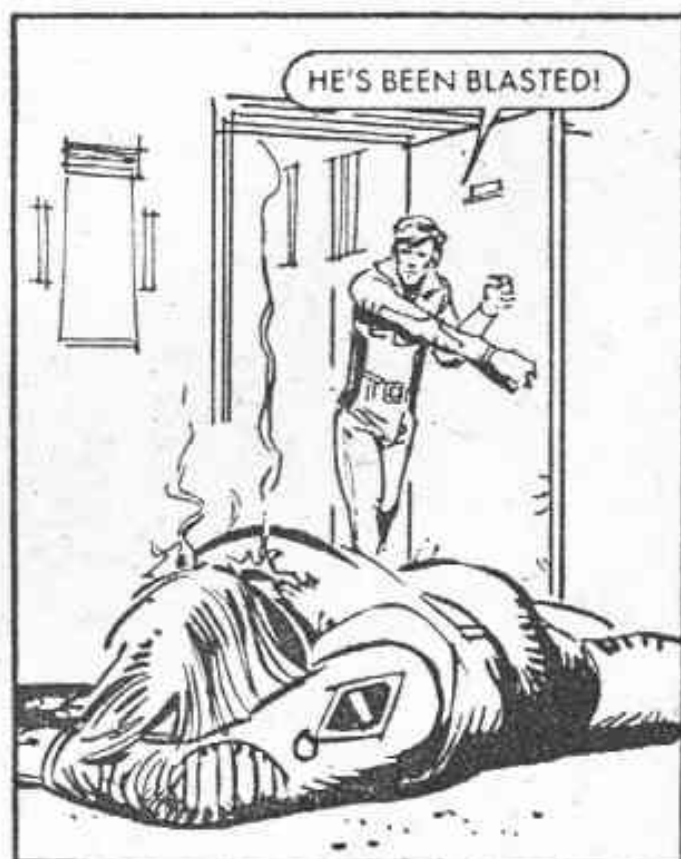


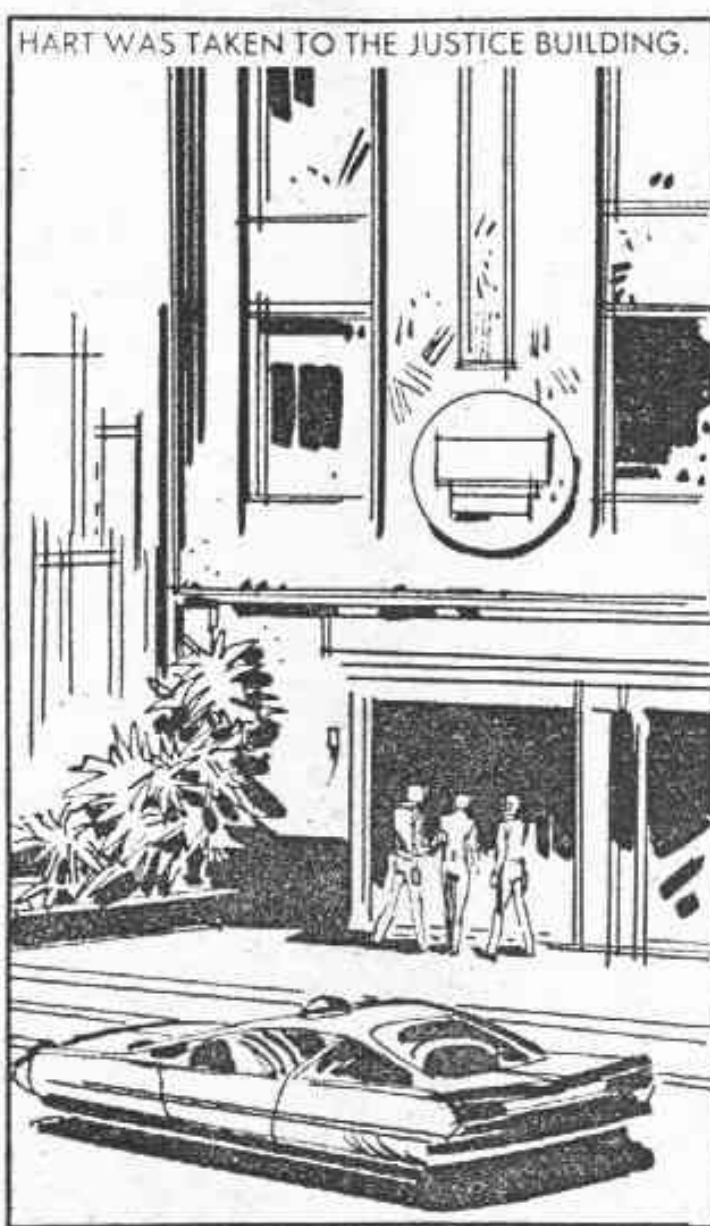
AS HART CAME FROM DELTAN, A WORLD
WITH A GRAVITY THREE TIMES GREATER
THAN EARTH, HE WAS MUCH STRONGER
THAN MOST OTHER MEN.





HART DIDN'T TAKE LONG TO FIND THE PREMISES.



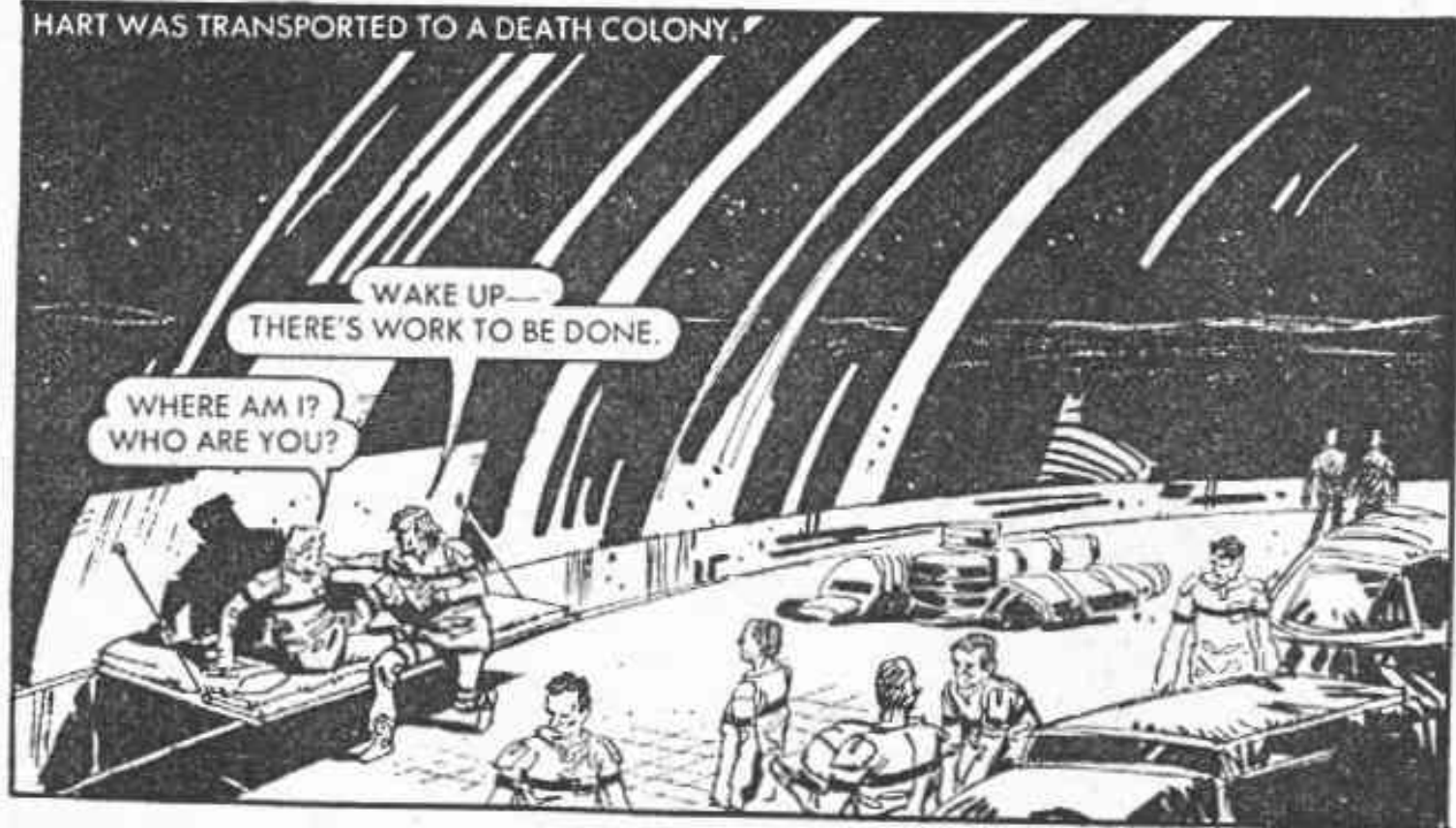


THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE ON MILO'S WORLD, HARJ WILLEM, LISTENED TO HART'S TALE.






HART WAS TRANSPORTED TO A DEATH COLONY.










I WAS PLANETARY ADMINISTRATOR OF THIS PRISON UNTIL KORVATH TOOK OVER MILO'S WORLD. FROM HERE THERE IS NO ESCAPE.



DON'T TOUCH THAT! IT'S A KRAI. OUR SUITS AREN'T SHIELDED PROPERLY SO THE URANIUM ORE'S DANGEROUS ENOUGH, BUT THAT'S DEADLY.

WHAT'S A KRAI?



AT THE END OF THE DAY'S LABOUR—

IT'LL BE A MONTH BEFORE
WE SEE THAT SHIP AGAIN!

AND WITH LUCK, WE'LL THEN
BE LEAVING ON IT.

YOU'VE A PLAN?

YES—CARE TO TRY IT?

HART EXPLAINED HIS PLAN—AND WORK STARTED IMMEDIATELY.

REMEMBER, KEEP THEM SEPARATE!



A MONTH LATER, THEY HAD ENOUGH KRAI.

NOW, WHAT DO WE DO?

WE PUT HALF AT EACH END OF AN OLD AIR CYLINDER, SEPARATED BY A VACUUM, WITH A CHARGE AT EITHER END TO BLOW THE U-235 TOGETHER.



BY THE TIME THE AIR REPLENISHING CRAFT WAS DUE, THE BOMB WAS COMPLETE.



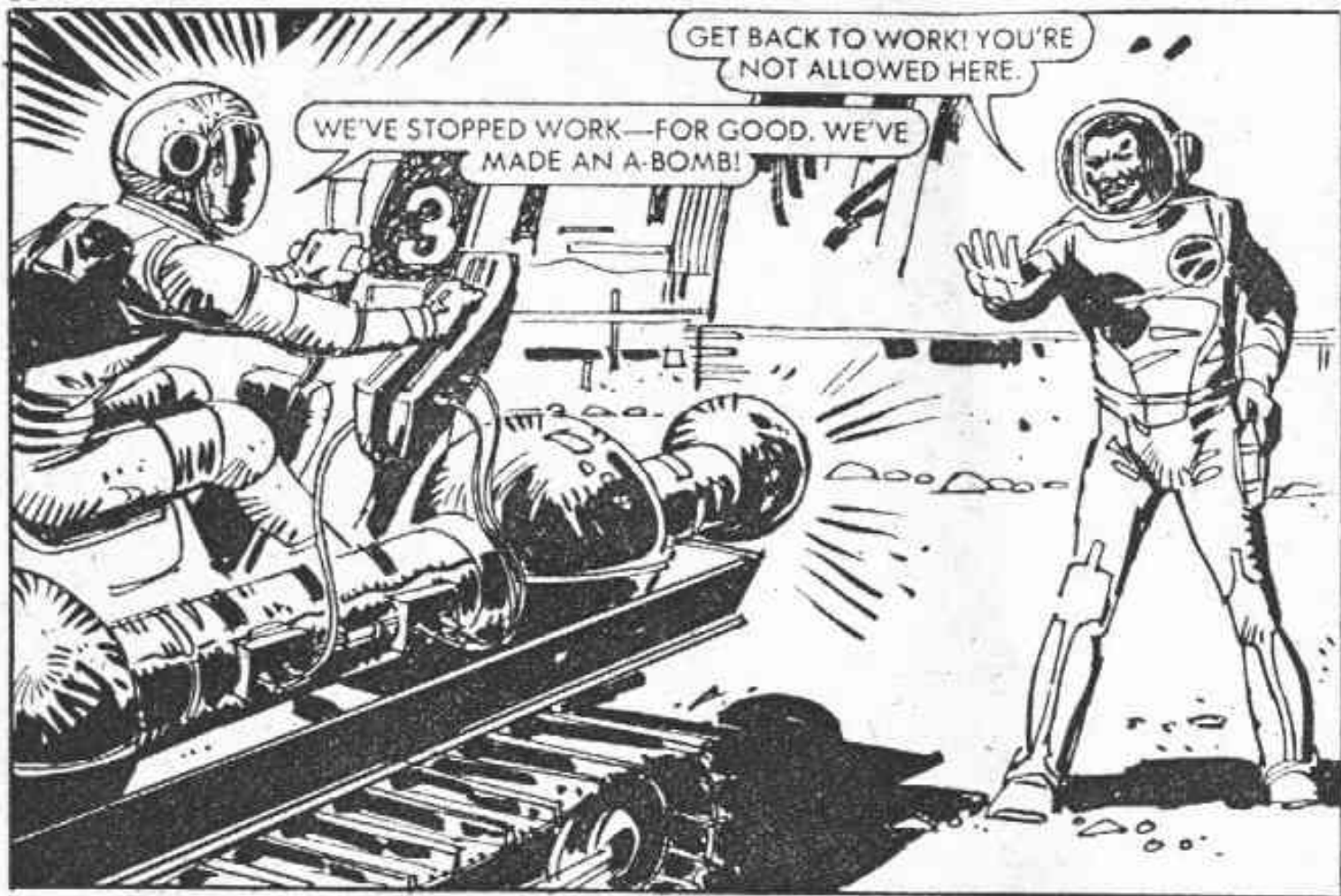
SO THAT'S IT!

YES, A CRUDE BUT WORKABLE A-BOMB.
NOW WE HAVE TO MAKE USE OF IT.

RIGHT ON TIME THE CRAFT ARRIVED.



THAT'S IT! ACTION STATIONS.



THE PRISONERS BLASTED OFF IN THE CAPTURED SHIP...

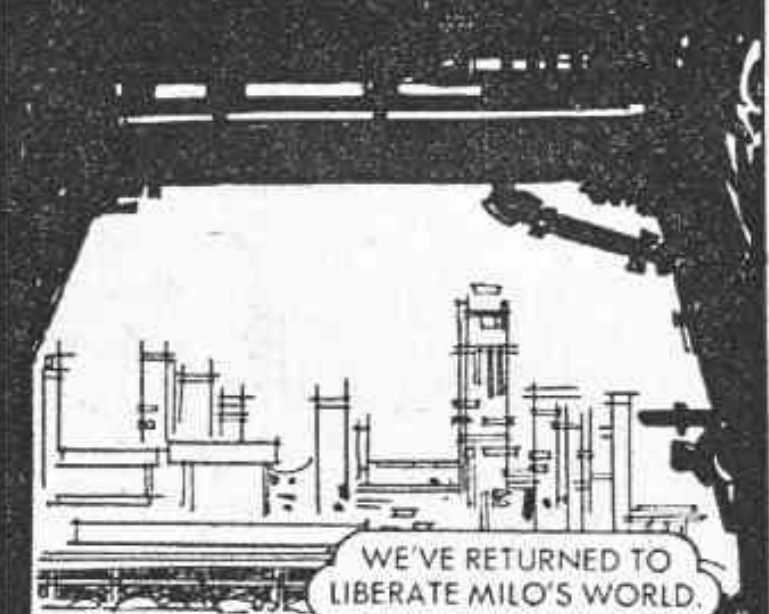


THAT'S THE END OF THAT NIGHTMARE.



... JUST AS THE CRUDE A-BOMB WENT OFF.

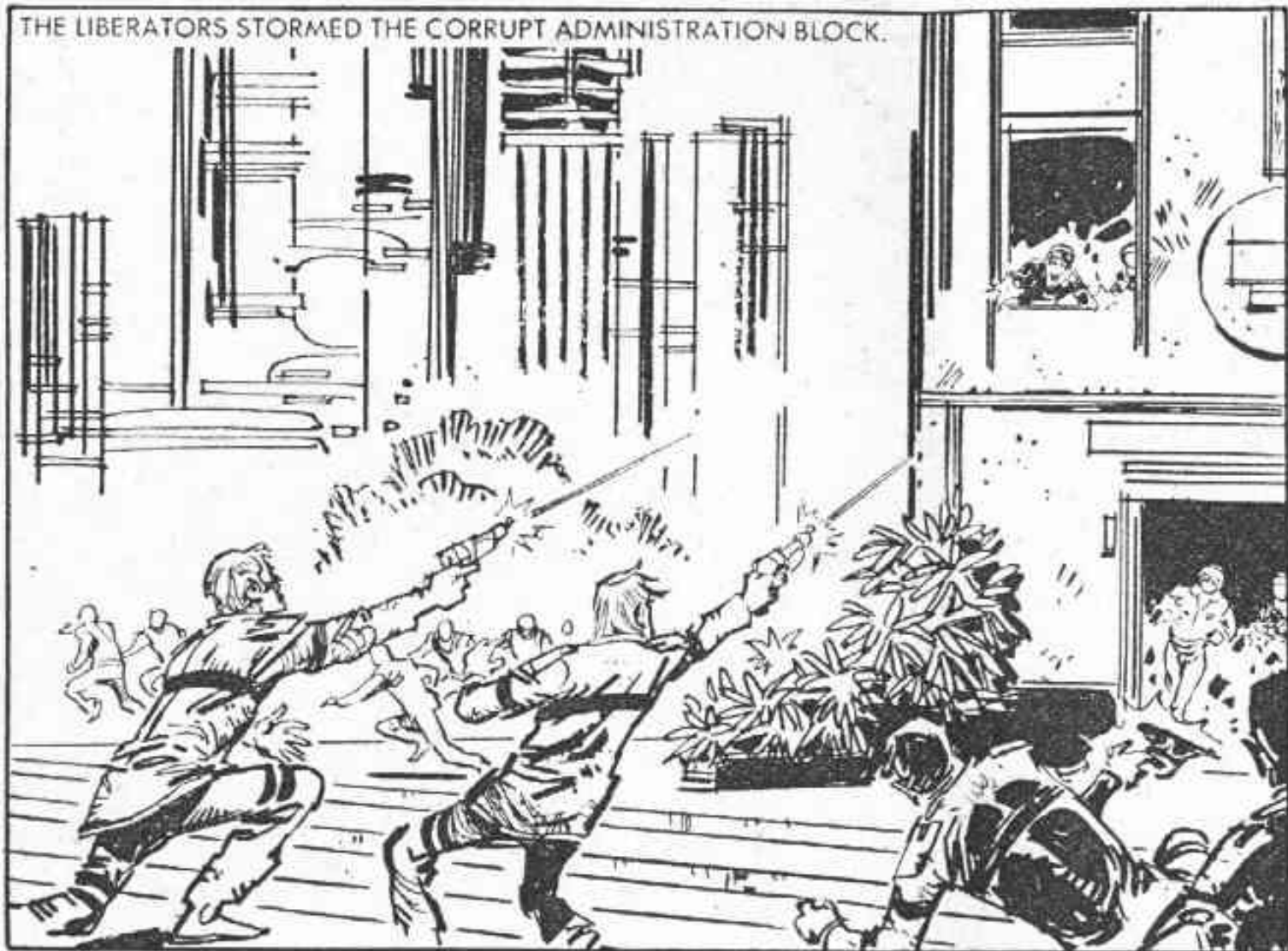
THE CRAFT LANDED ON MILO'S WORLD—



WE'VE RETURNED TO LIBERATE MILO'S WORLD.



THE LIBERATORS STORMED THE CORRUPT ADMINISTRATION BLOCK.

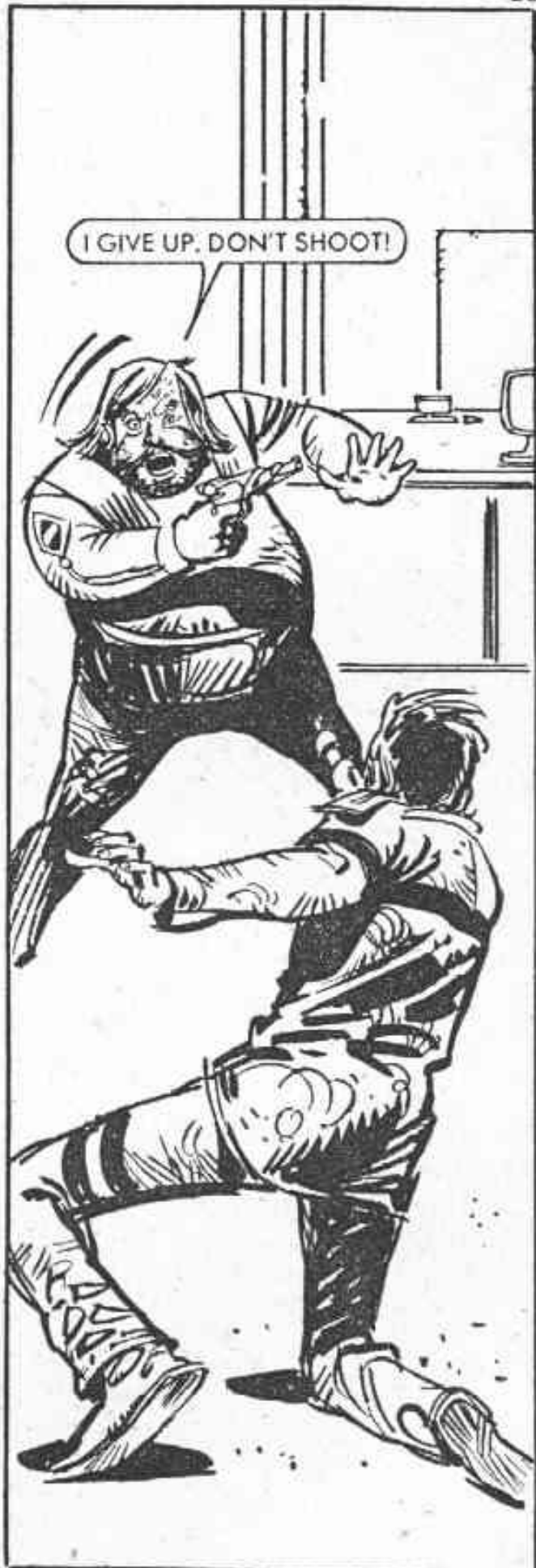


USING ALL HIS STRENGTH, HART BURST
THROUGH A FORCE BARRIER.

IT'S OVER, KORVATH.
CALL YOUR MEN OFF.



I GIVE UP. DON'T SHOOT!





YOUR EVIL REIGN HAS ENDED ... BUT
HOW DO I FIND THE OTHERS NOW.



I'M ... DYING ... WHY
SHOULD THEY ... ESCAPE?
THEY ARE JASE MARGEREN,
ON BETA KORDOMAI
AND ...



SO HE'S DEAD. DID
HE TELL YOU WHAT
YOU WANTED?

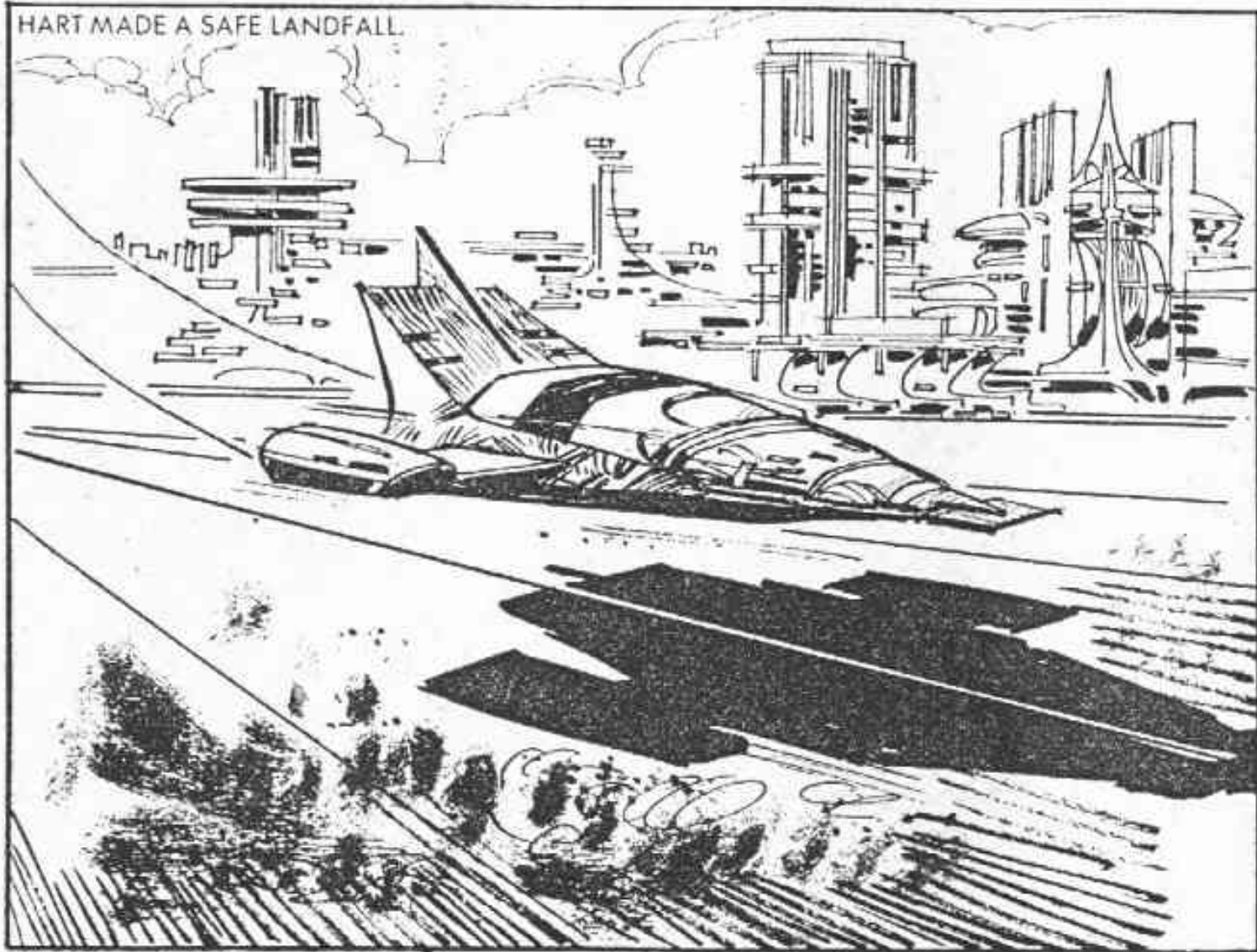


MAYBE! MILO'S WORLD
IS FREE AGAIN. KEEP IT THAT WAY!

HART TOOK MANY SPACIALS TRAVELLING TO BETA KORDOMAI.

BETA KORDOMAI HOUSES A MEDICAL CENTRE! THAT'S ODD — A LARGE MEDICAL CENTRE ON SUCH A SMALL WORLD.

HART MADE A SAFE LANDFALL.

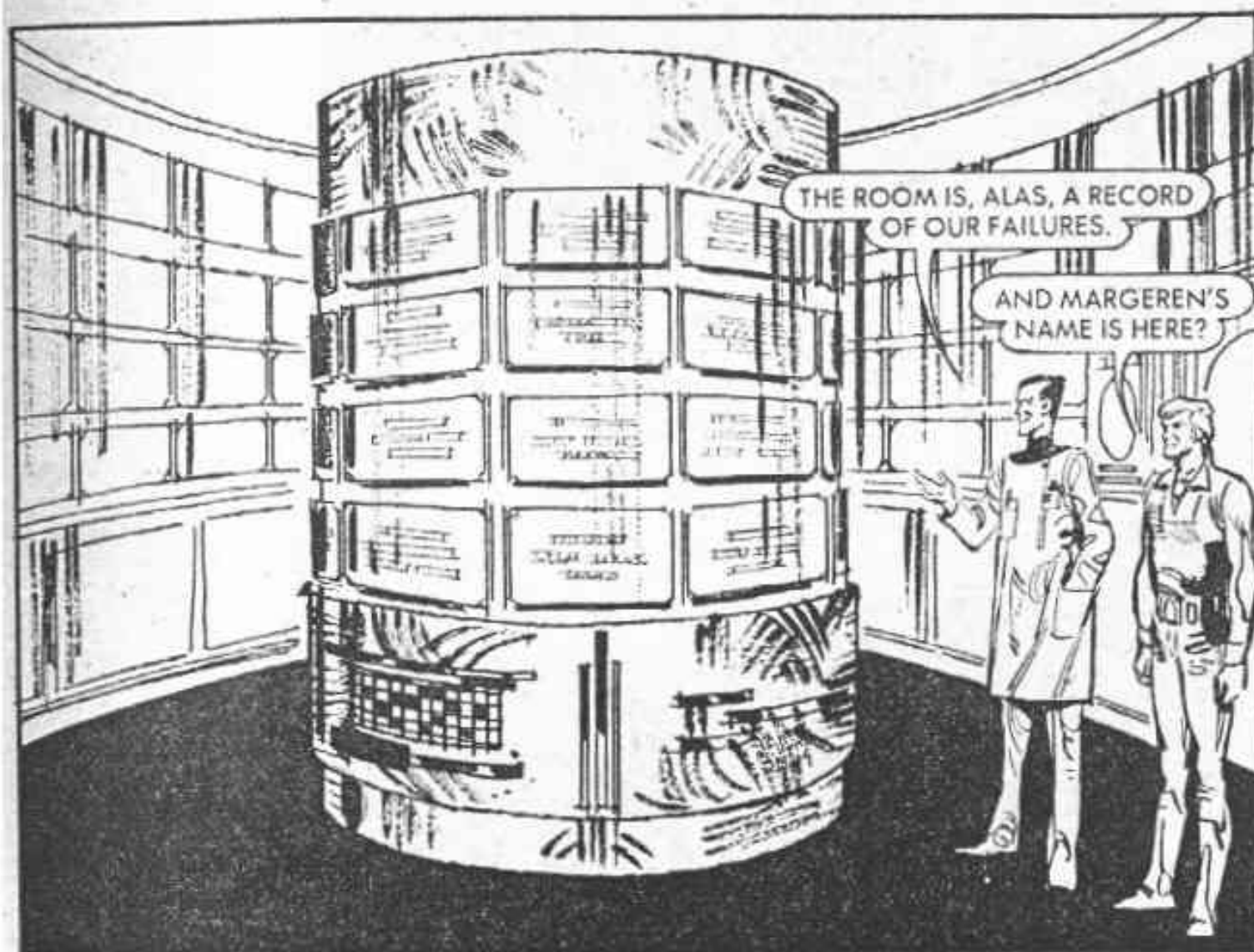






DR. EUTOME, THE DIRECTOR, ARRIVED.







HART BOARDED A CITIHOVER —

ALPHA CENTAURI HILTON, PLEASE.

THERE'S SOMETHING ODD ABOUT
THAT PLACE, BUT WHAT?

ALONE IN HIS HOTEL ROOM, HART THOUGHT
HARD.

THAT'S IT ... THOSE NAMES WERE SOME OF THE
RICHEST FAMILIES IN THE GALAXY! NOW WHY
SHOULD THEY HAVE COME TO THIS BACKWATER?

HART USED HIS SKILLS TO ENTER THE MEDICAL CENTRE UNDETECTED.

I MUST HAVE ANOTHER
LOOK AT THAT ROOM.



IN THE HALL OF PLAQUES...

MARGEREN, MORGAN, NIVEN—
ALL MULTIGALAXY TYCOONS.
WHY DID THEY ALL DIE ON
THIS PLANET?



BUT HART'S ARRIVAL HADN'T PASSED UNNOTICED.



YOU'RE UNDER ARREST!

I'M AGENT TALLIS OF THE GALACTIC SECURITY SERVICE. DR. EUTOME WILL VOUCH FOR ME.

INDEED I CAN! I CAN VOUCH THAT YOU KNOW TOO MUCH! A PITY. OR PERHAPS NOT. YOU MIGHT PROVE OF USE. AT LEAST, YOUR BODY MIGHT.



WHAT DO YOU MEAN?




I THINK YOU'VE GUESSED WHAT
WE'RE DOING? TRANSPLANT
SURGERY—IMMORTALITY!



YOU TRANSPLANT THE
BRAINS OF OLD, RICH MEN
INTO THE BODIES OF
YOUNG MEN. THAT GIVES
THE OLD BRAIN A KIND
OF IMMORTALITY!


YOU'RE CLEVER, TALLIS. A PITY WE ONLY
REQUIRE YOUR BODY. BUT WE SHALL MAKE
A PROFIT OUT OF YOU. WE CHARGE A
BILLION CREDITS FOR NEW BODY.





AFTER DELTAN, MARGEREN COULD EASILY AFFORD A BILLION. AND NOW HE'S GOT A FIT YOUNG BODY. IT USED TO BELONG TO A BETA KORDOMAI PEASANT. THEY THINK THEY'RE GETTING FREE MEDICAL TREATMENT...

YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH IT!



BUT WE ALREADY HAVE! I'LL LEAVE YOU NOW. YOU HAVE ONLY A FEW HOURS LEFT. OR RATHER, YOUR BRAIN HAS. YOUR BODY WILL LAST MUCH, MUCH LONGER!



FINALLY THE GUARDS ARRIVED TO TAKE HIM AWAY.

GIVE US ANY TROUBLE AND WE'LL STUN YOU NOW.



IN THE THEATRE —

WHILE THERE'S LIFE,
THERE'S HOPE!



GIVE HIM A TRANQUILLISER.
WE DON'T WANT HIM STRUGGLING.



BUT IT'S
GOING TO HURT YOU.

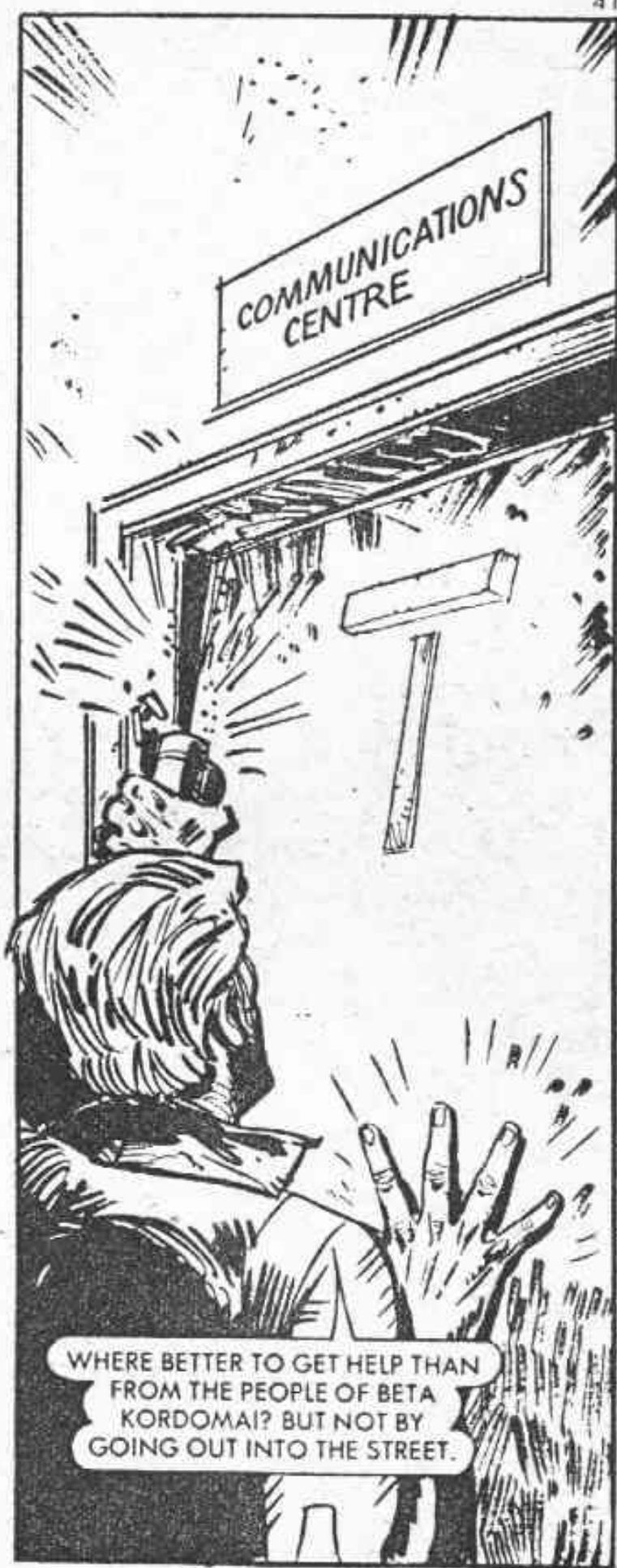


HART GRASPED THE SURGEON'S WINDPIPE —



— AND HURLED HIM ACROSS THE ROOM.







HART ACTIVATED THE SCREEN.





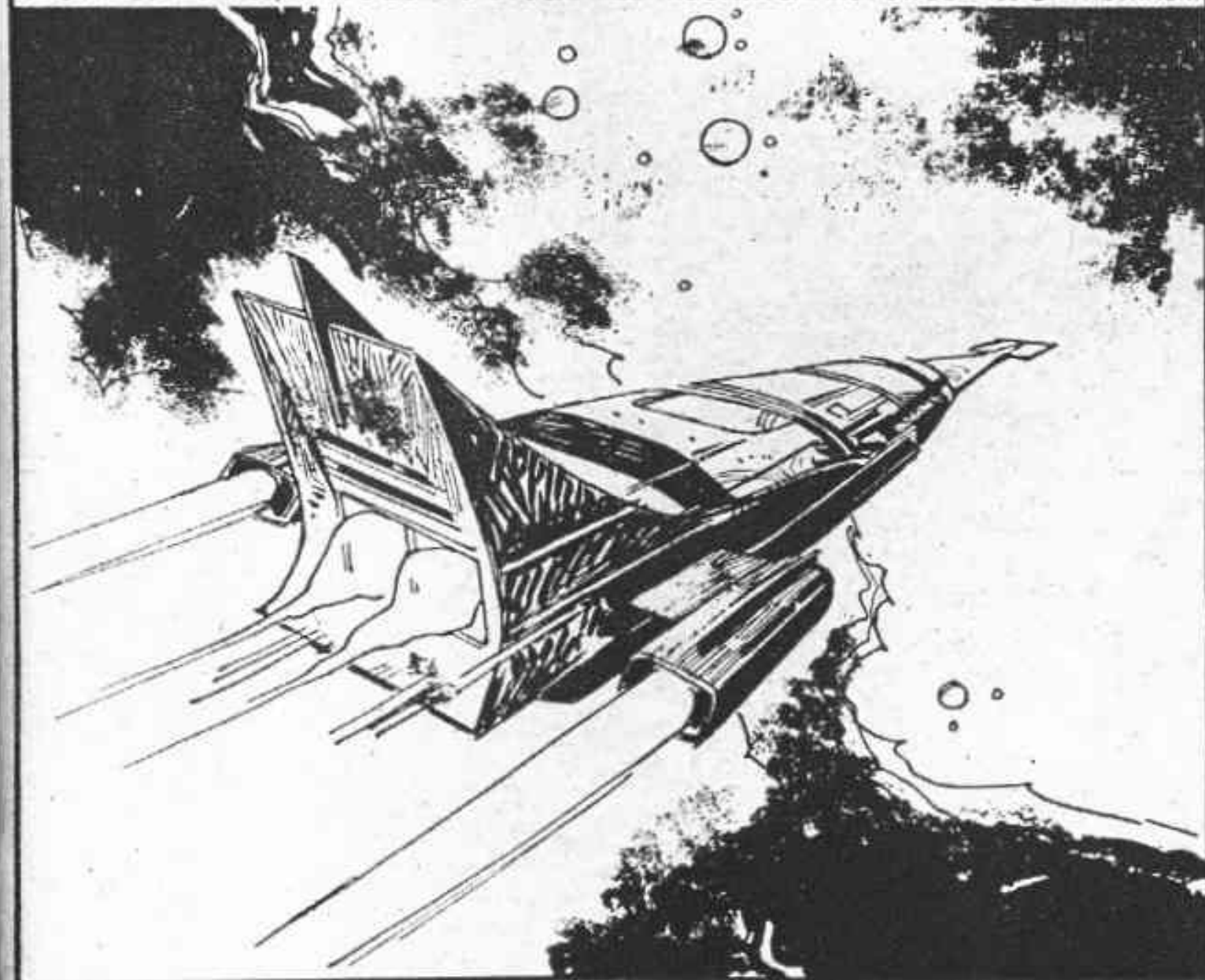


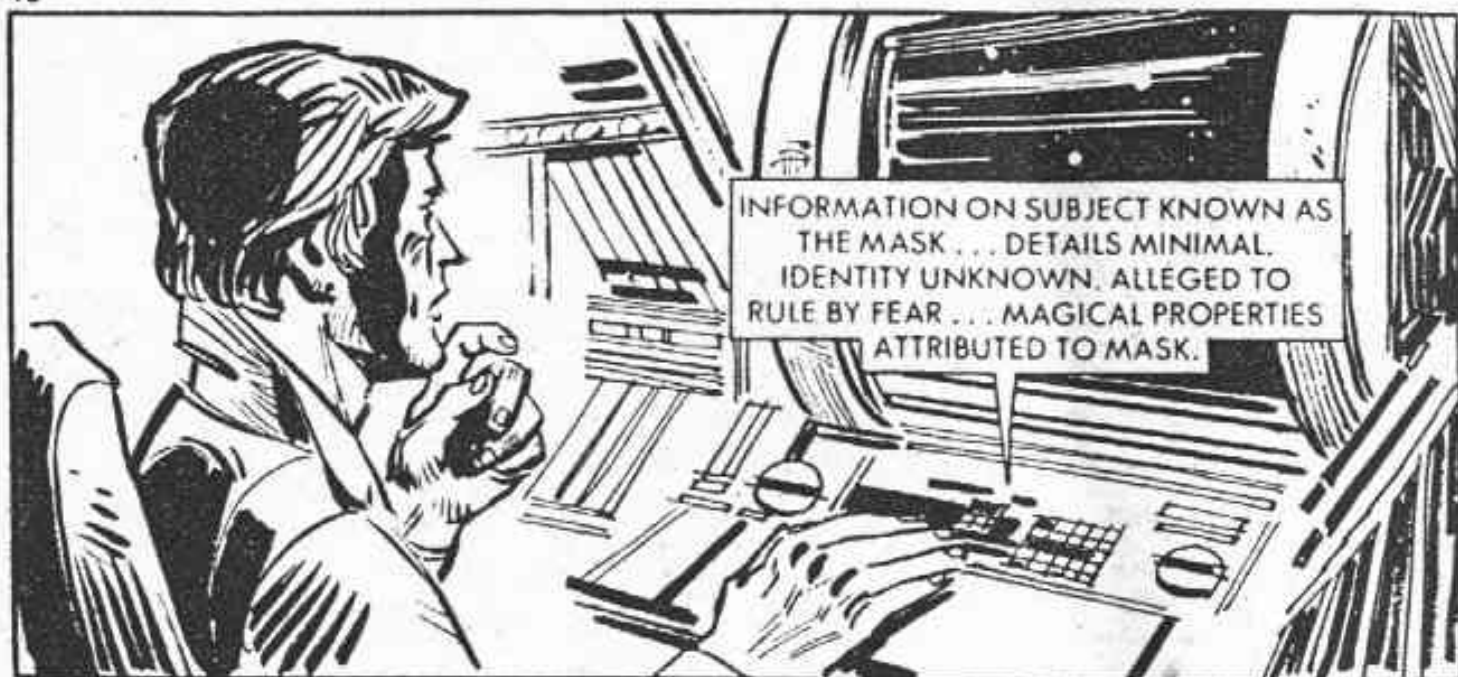
THE SECURITY SERVICE ARRIVED MANY SPACIALS LATER, AND HART FINALLY MET THE NEW MARGEREN.





BACK IN DEEP SPACE, HART'S COMPUTER SCANNED THE DATA BANKS FOR DETAILS OF THE MASK.

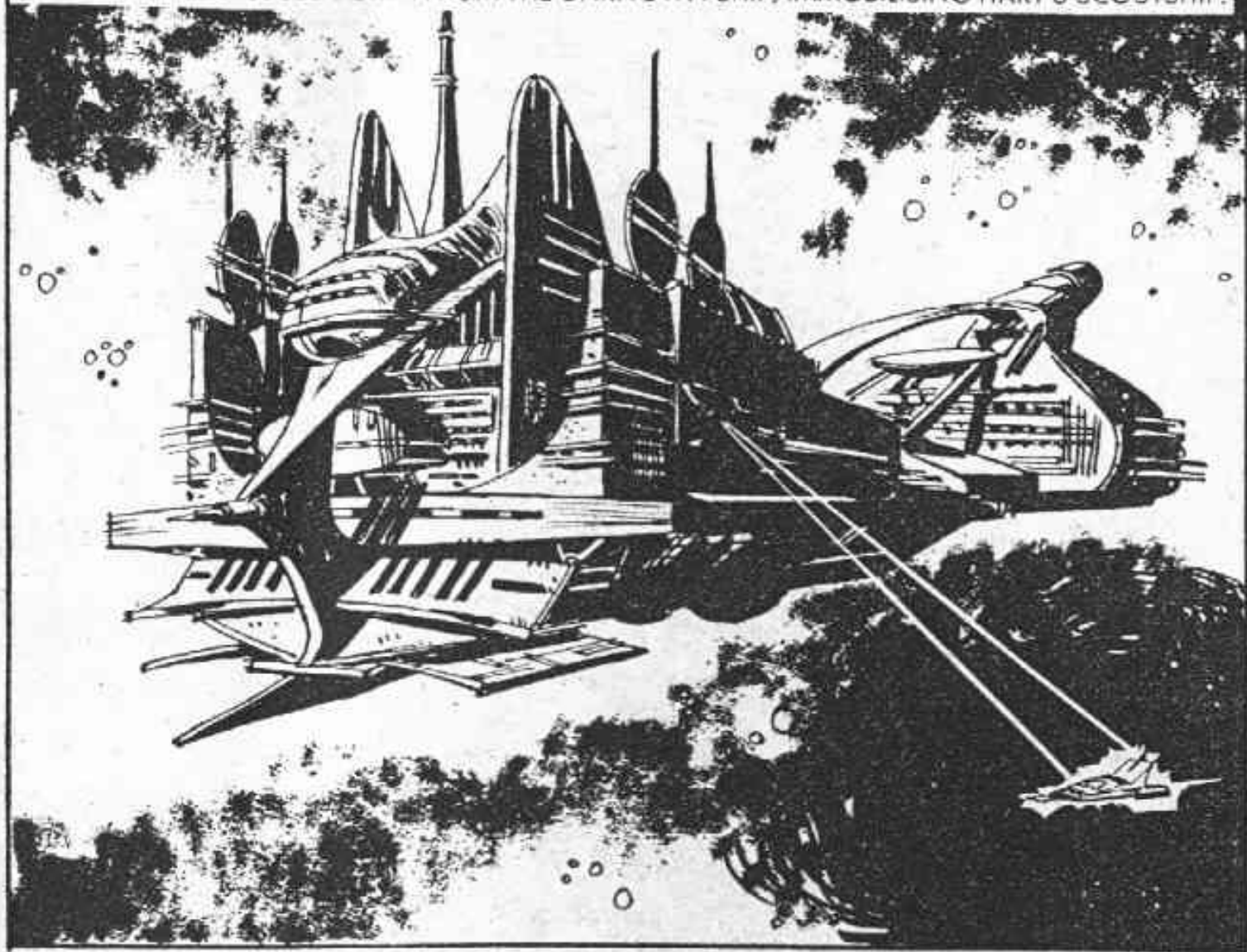




SUDDENLY —



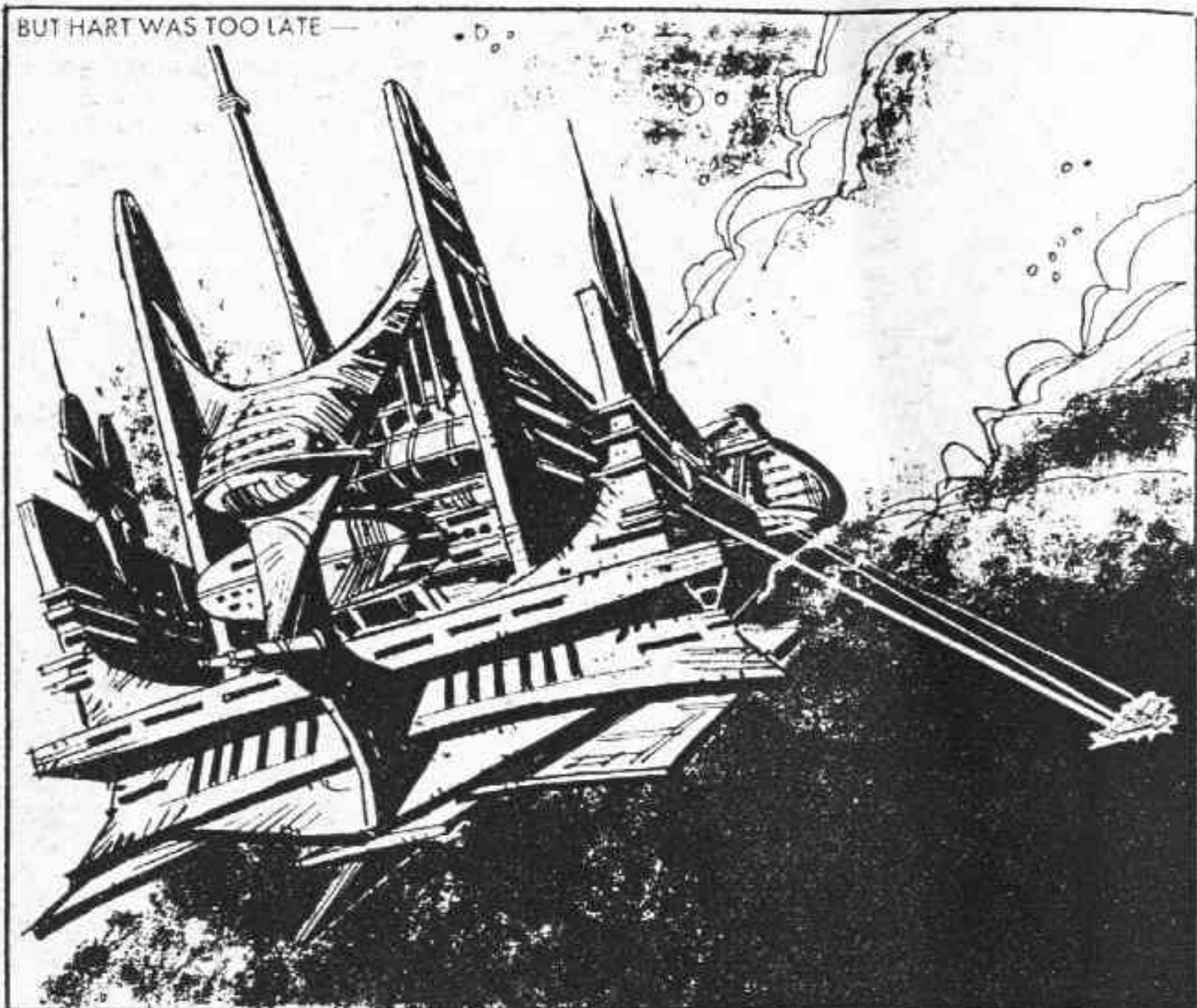
TRACTOR BEAMS ISSUED FORTH FROM THE UNKNOWN SHIP, IMMOBILISING HART'S SCOUTSHIP.



THOSE TRACTOR BEAMS HAVE ME
CAUGHT. IF I CAN JUST GET SOME
POWER, I MIGHT BE ABLE TO BREAK
FREE!



BUT HART WAS TOO LATE —



AN IMMOBILISER BEAM ... PAIN ...



WHEN HART WOKE IT WAS ON A NEW WORLD.

MY NAME IS ORTO.
CAN I HELP YOU?



ON THE ENCLOSED WORLD
RULED BY THE MASK.

SO THE MASK
DOES EXIST!



HART TURNED —



HART SET OFF FOR THE CRYSTAL CITY.



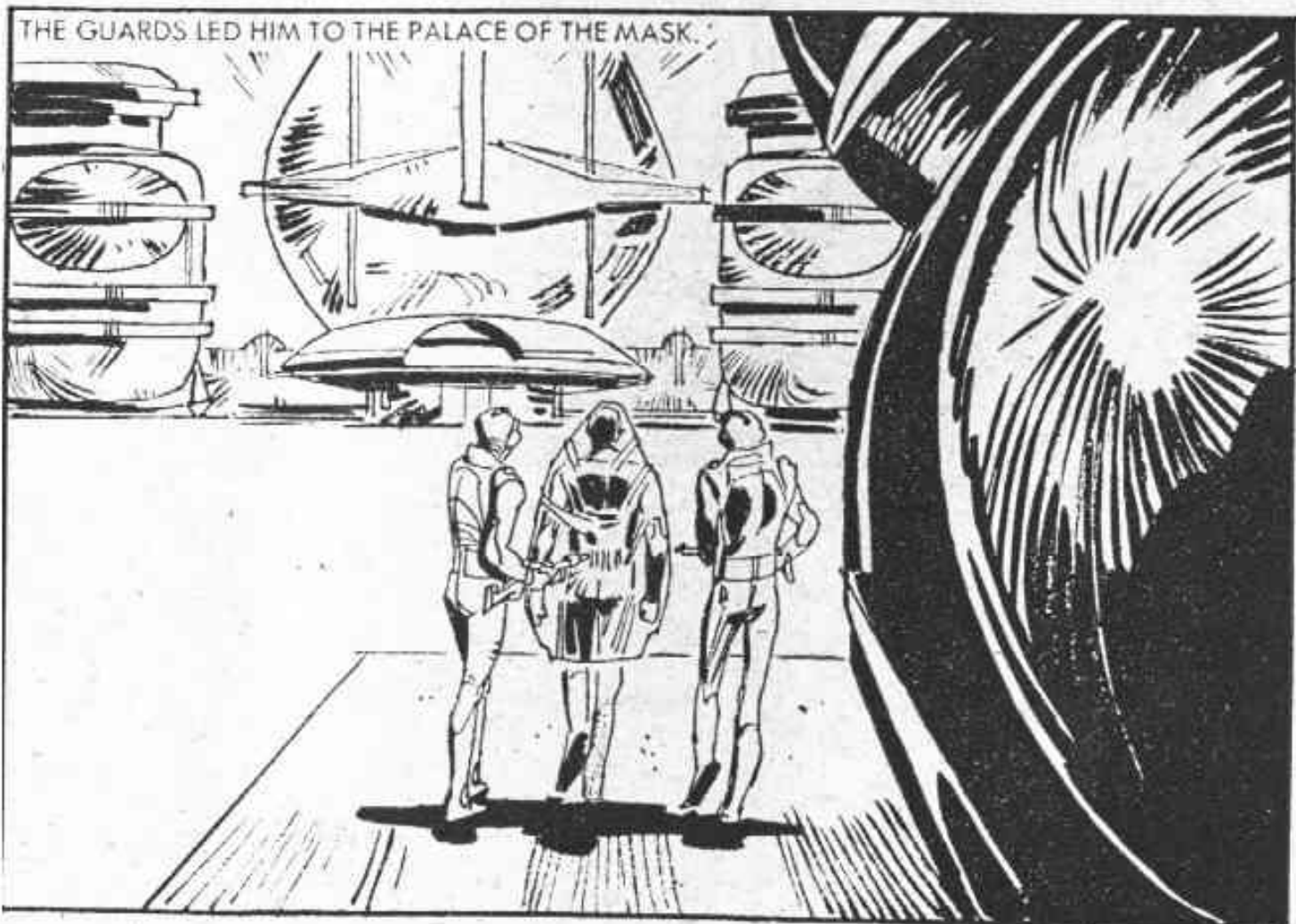
IT'S INCREDIBLE!



I WONDER WHAT SORT OF RECEPTION I'LL GET?

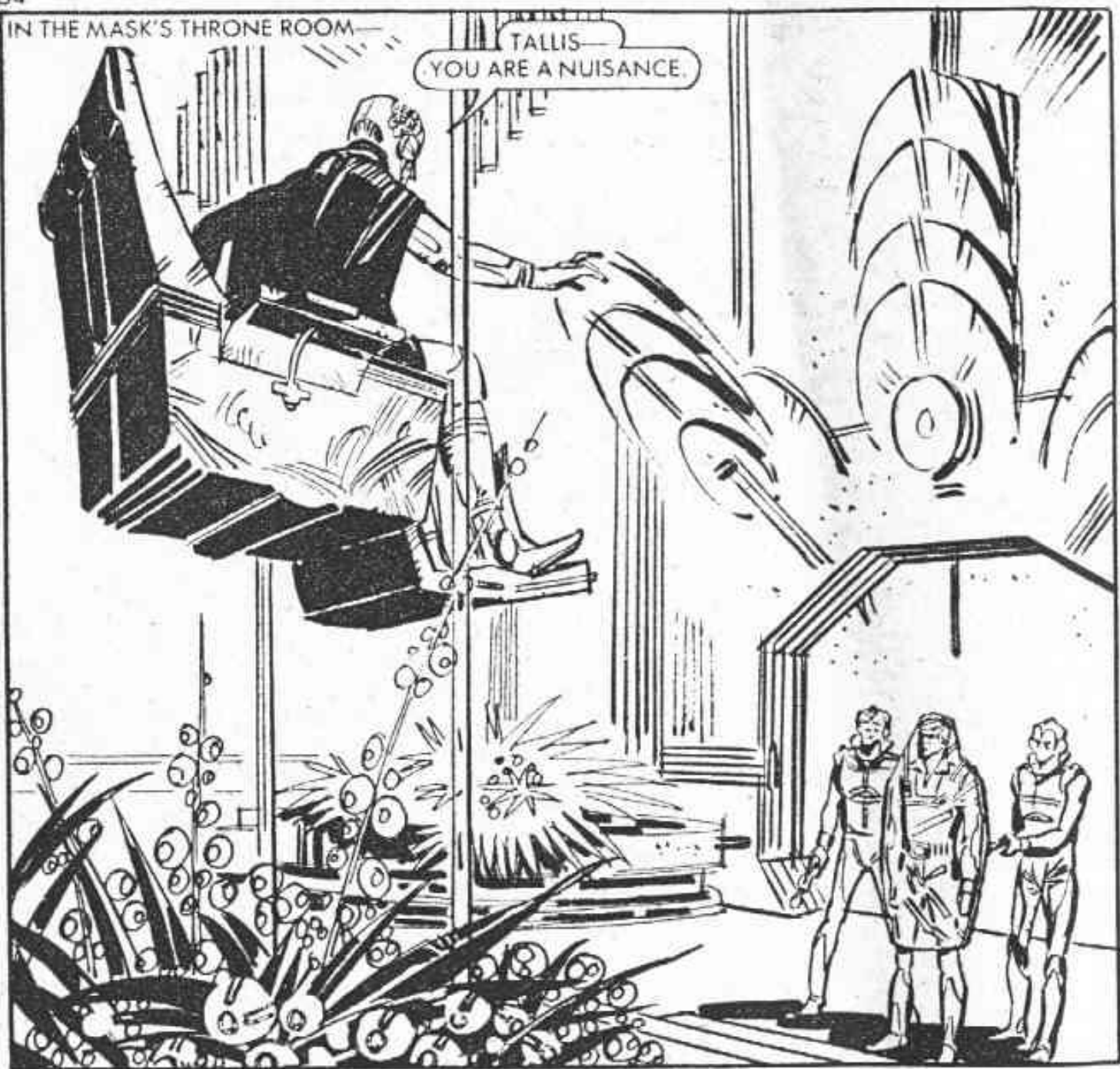
HE SOON FOUND OUT—





IN THE MASK'S THRONE ROOM—

TALLIS—
YOU ARE A NUISANCE.



YOU ARE TALLIS THE HUNTER,
WHO HAS ALREADY DESTROYED
TWO MEMBERS OF THE GROUP
OF THREE! YOUR HUNT IS OVER.
DEATH IS YOUR REWARD.





HART USED HIS IMMENSE STRENGTH IN ONE ENORMOUS BURST.

I CAN BREAK THIS. I THINK.

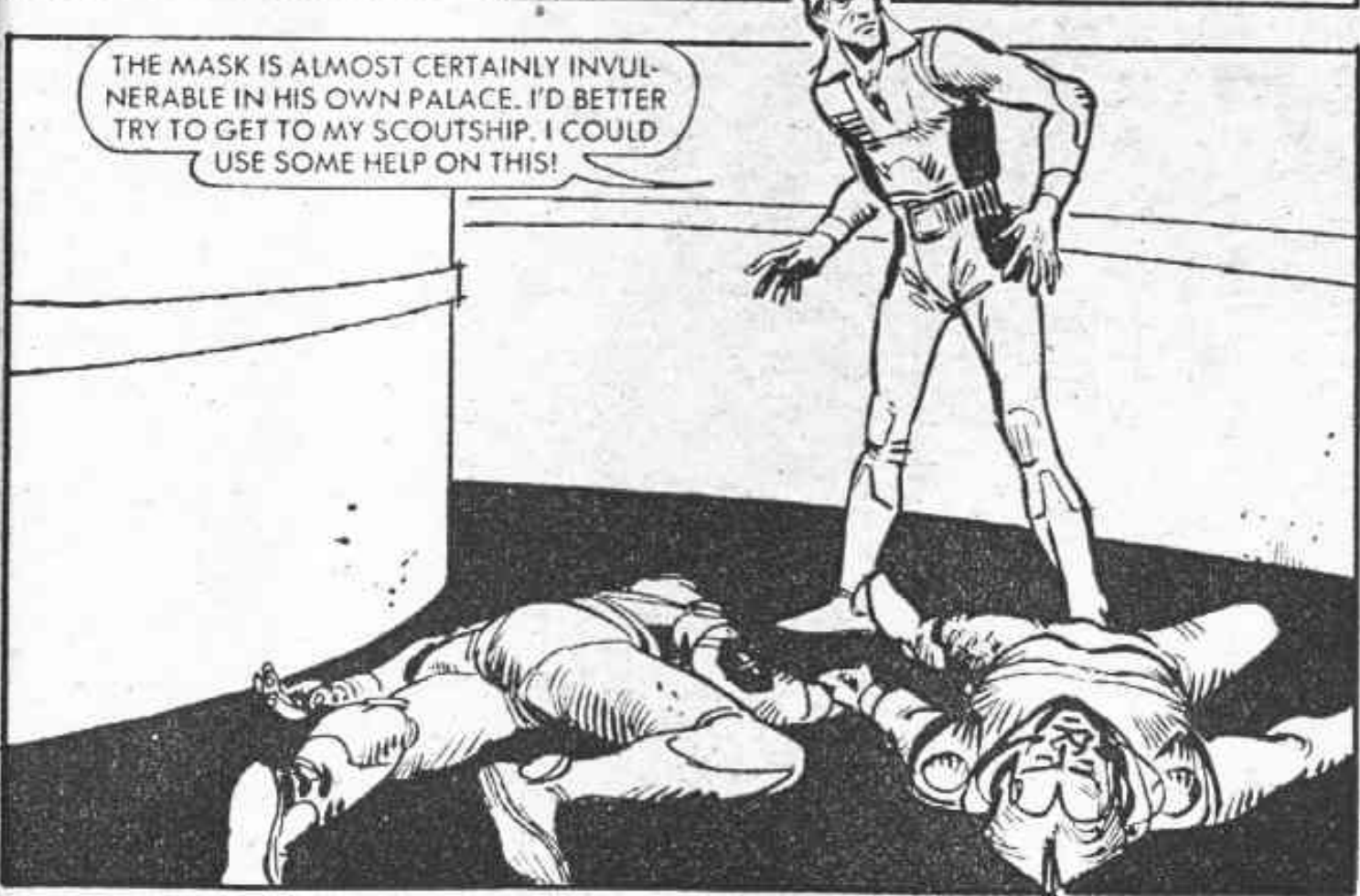
BY THE MASK!
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

JOHN OF STAFFORD

THE GUARDS POSED LITTLE PROBLEM.



THE MASK IS ALMOST CERTAINLY INVULNERABLE IN HIS OWN PALACE. I'D BETTER TRY TO GET TO MY SCOUTSHIP. I COULD USE SOME HELP ON THIS!





PERHAPS ORTO WILL HAVE AN
IDEA WHERE MY SCOUTSHIP IS.

MUCH LATER HE ARRIVED IN A DESERTED VILLAGE.



THERE'S NOBODY HERE.
WHERE COULD ORTO BE?



THE MASK GAVE ORDERS—

IF YOU SEE TALLIS, LET HIM PASS.
THIS IS MY HUNT AND I WANT TO
ENJOY THE KILL MYSELF. COME ONLY
IF I CALL YOU.



WHAT'S HE DOING HERE?



THE MASK UNMASKED.

ORTO!



NOW, MASK—

WHAT—



HART AND ORTO STRUGGLED
FOR THE BLASTER!



YOU FOOL! I—

IT'S GONE OFF!

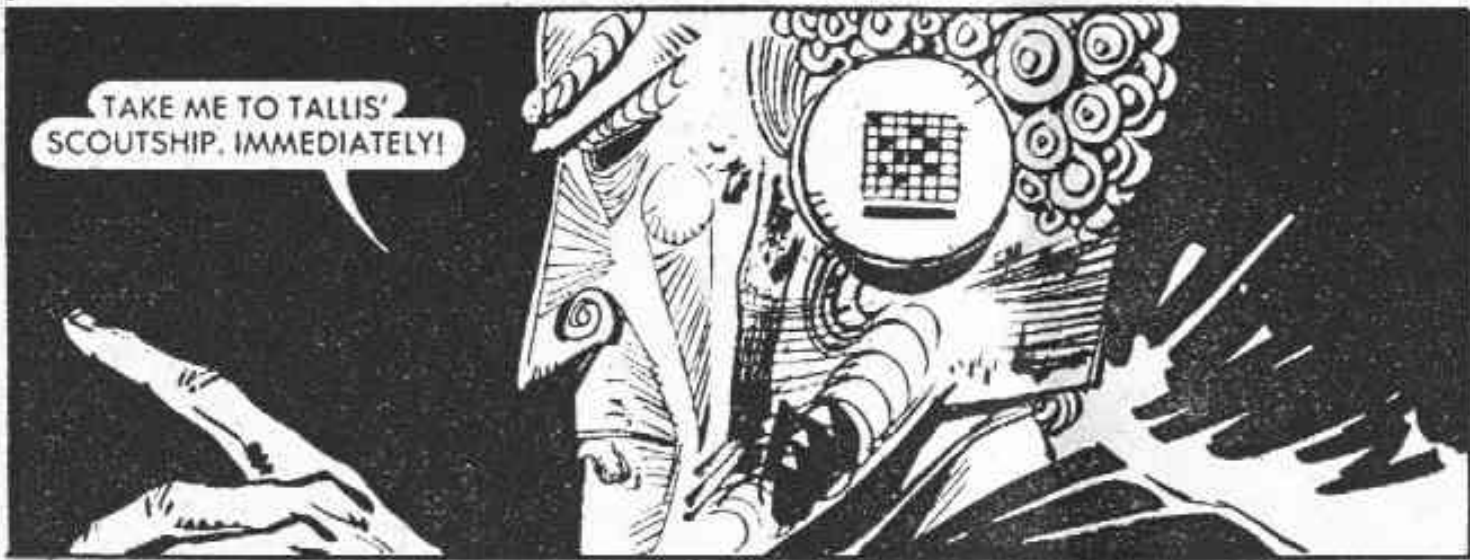
THE GROUP OF
THREE IS NO MORE,
BUT THOSE GUARDS
ARE STILL OUTSIDE.



FORGET THE HUNT. THERE
IS MUCH TO BE DONE.


AS THE MASKED ONE COMMANDS.





TAKE ME TO TALLIS'
SCOUTSHIP, IMMEDIATELY!

THE GUARDS OBEYED THE MASK.

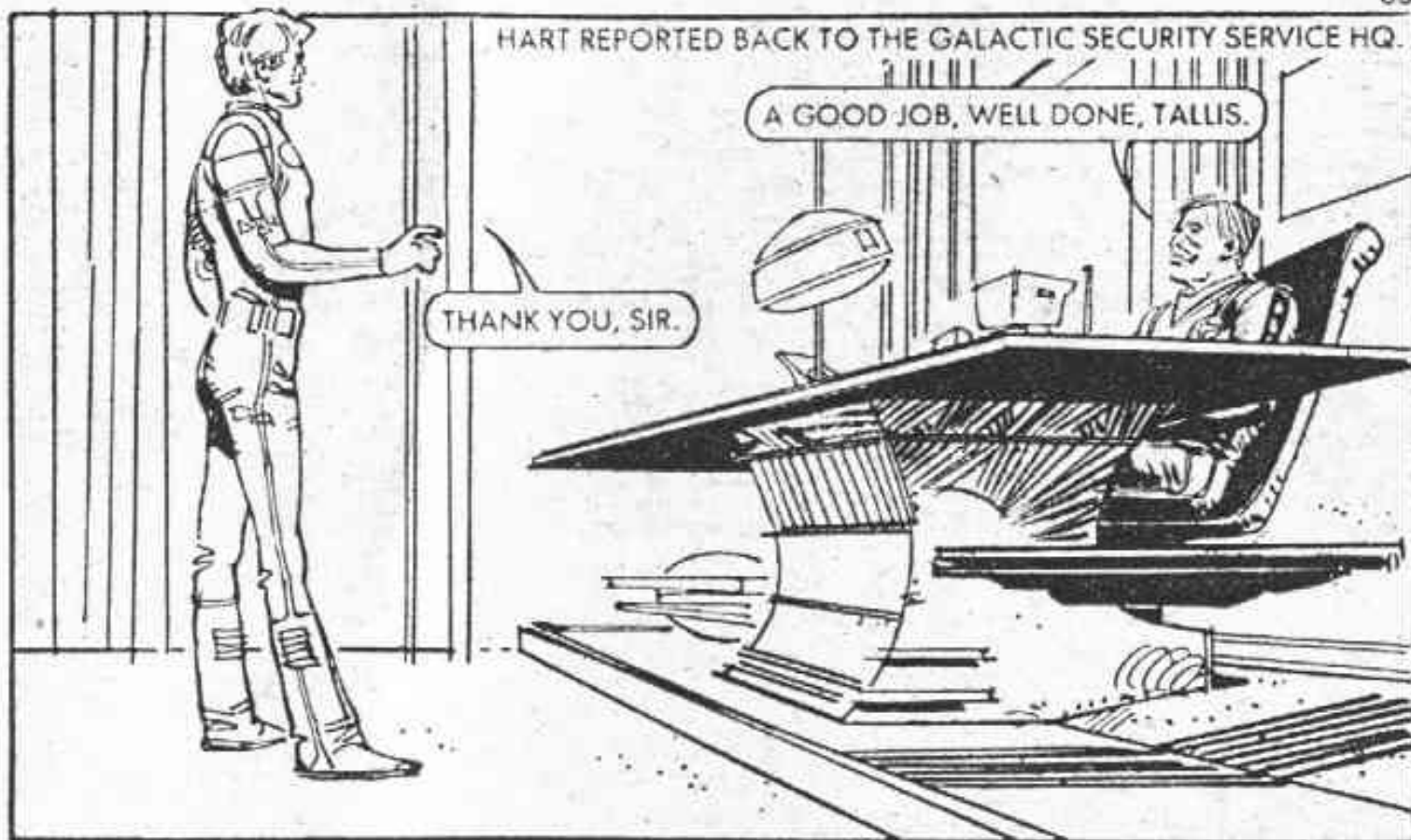


I'LL BE GLAD TO GET OUT
OF THIS FANCY DRESS—AND OFF
THE WORLD OF THE MASK! I'LL
LEAVE THE SECURITY SERVICE THE
JOB OF TURNING IT INTO A DECENT
WORLD.

HART REPORTED BACK TO THE GALACTIC SECURITY SERVICE HQ.

A GOOD JOB, WELL DONE, TALLIS.

THANK YOU, SIR.



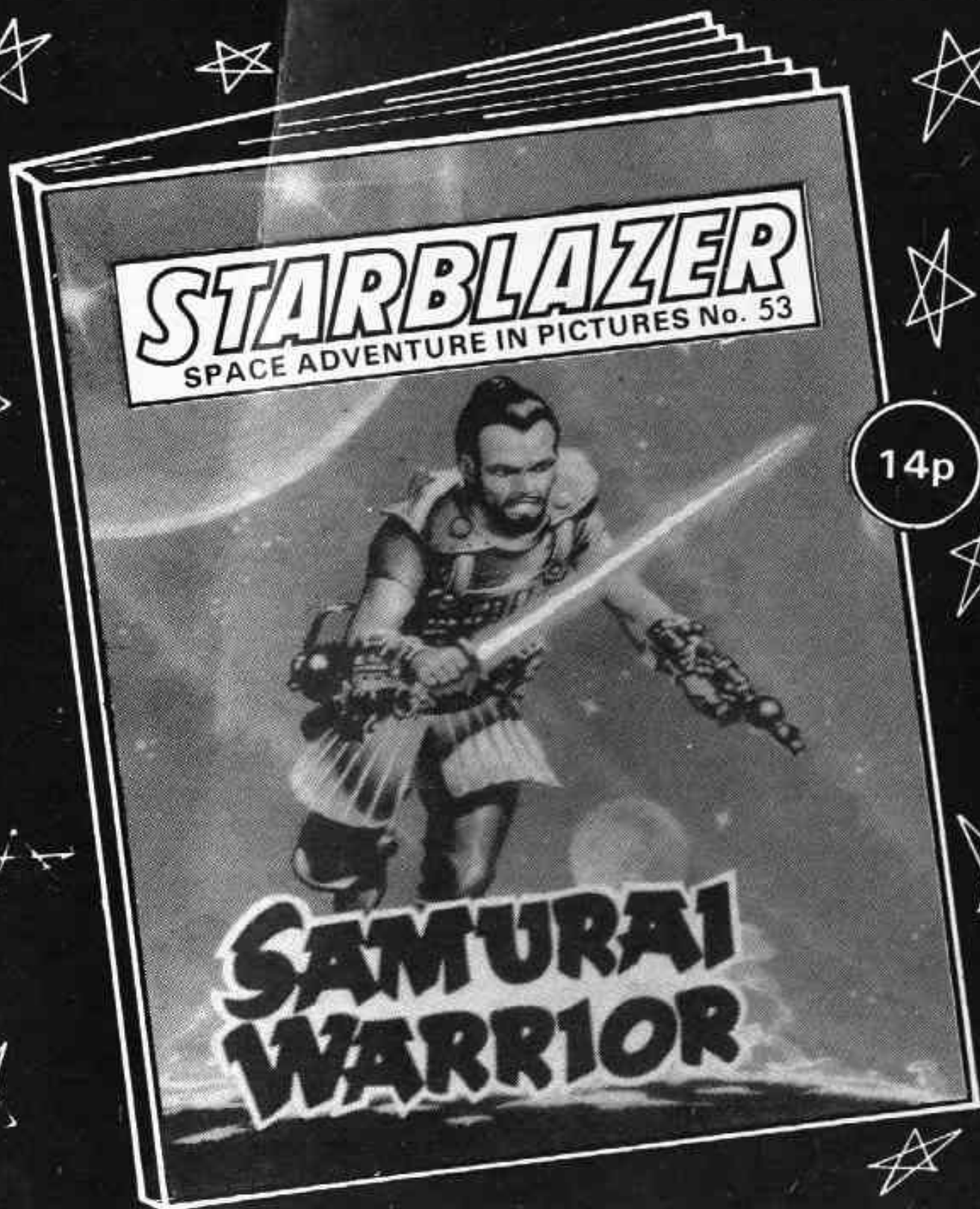
YOU SHALL NOT HAVE TO REPORT
BACK TO ME IN FUTURE. THIS IS
YOUR UNLIMITED AGENT PASS...



... YOU ARE NOW THE LAW—JUDGE,
JURY, AND OFTEN EXECUTIONER. TEMPER
YOUR POWERS WITH JUSTICE, TALLIS,
AND GO OUT INTO THAT GREAT, BLACK,
EVIL UNIVERSE TO MAKE IT A BETTER
PLACE.



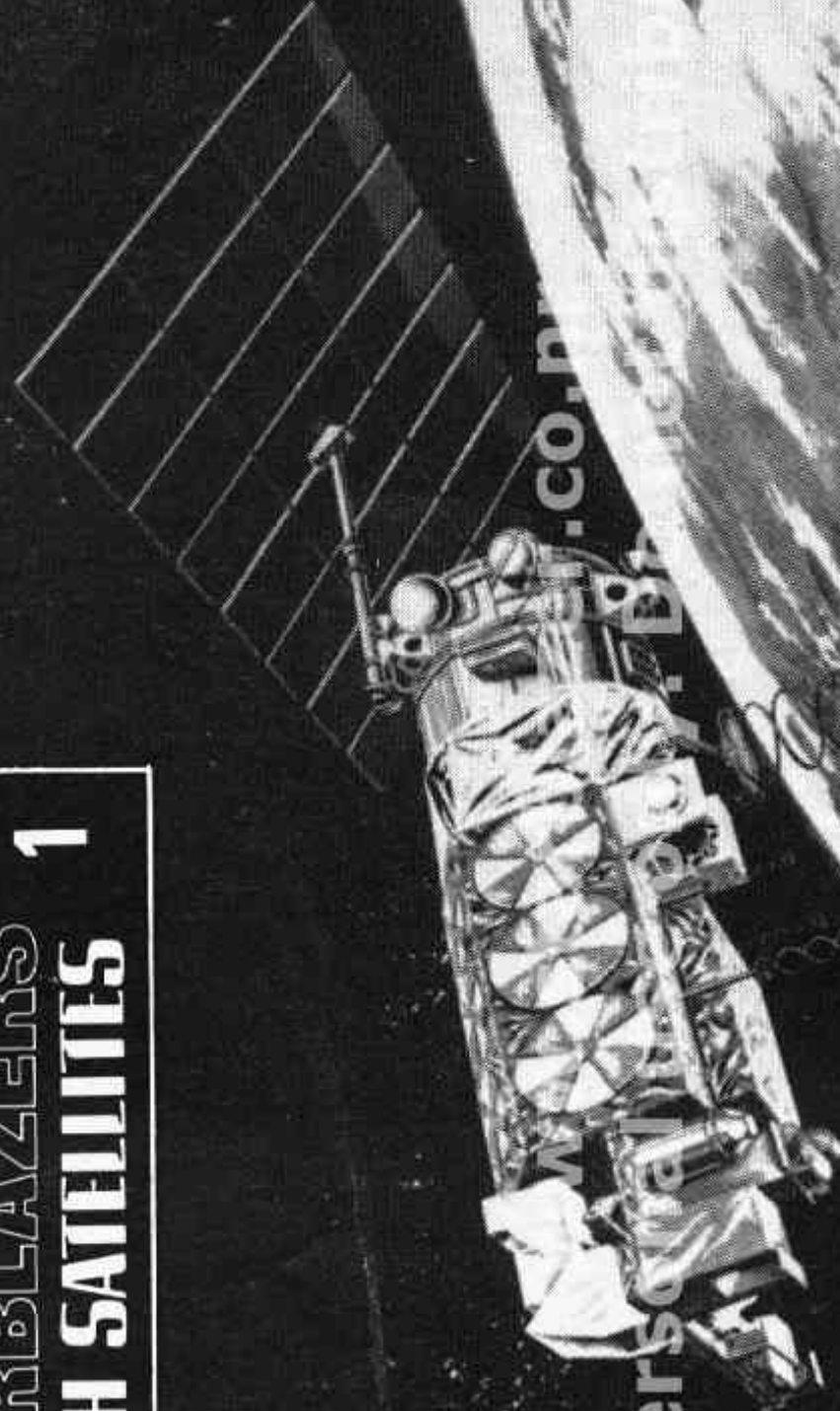
IT'S OUT OF THIS WORLD



14p

THIS MONTH'S OTHER ACTION- PACKED STORY—NOW ON SALE

STARBLAZERS¹ EARTH SATELLITES



(for personal use only)

The first in a series of meteorological satellites, Tiros 1, was launched in April 1960. Illustrated is one of the latest, Tiros N. These satellites provide continuous day and night weather pictures and information of temperatures and humidity changes. It is part of a world-wide study of weather patterns. Launched by America.